

Making Release Time Work

An essential component of most TEACH Early Childhood® scholarships is paid release time. Because most TEACH scholarship recipients work full time and have family responsibilities, this time helps them balance school with work and home life. In evaluations of TEACH programs, sponsors often identify the release time component of the scholarship as one of the more difficult aspects of TEACH. As a sponsor or potential sponsor, you may recognize the importance of paid release time but also face staffing challenges in meeting this requirement. Below are some creative solutions that can help make it more manageable while increasing the likelihood of student success.

CREATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR PROVIDING PAID RELEASE TIME:

- Offer release time during rest time so scholarship recipients can study or use the center's computer for papers and class projects.
- Schedule release time at a time when teacher-child ratios go down. Scholarship recipients can leave work early with pay, and qualified staff can fill in if needed.
- Allow scholarship recipients to come in late or leave early while receiving usual pay.
- Pay scholarship recipients for their lunch breaks. But remember, recipients can't work over 40 hours without overtime pay.
- Expand capacity to cover TEACH recipients' leave time. This usually works best for centers that sponsor several employees.
- Bank leave time and give scholarship recipients a whole day off before a major test, or give them half days off so it is easier to bring in a substitute.
- Use release time reimbursements to help with other TEACH-related costs. Center reimbursements for release time are paid based on the time given as documented by signed statements from the teacher and center director. If release time can be given without additional costs, then centers can bank resources to help pay for other TEACH related costs—like tuition, incentives or raises. Many centers find ways to offer release time when enrollment is lower and substitutes are not needed.

REMEMBER

Sponsors have complete flexibility for how release time is managed within their early childhood setting. But under no circumstances should providing release time be done at the detriment of maintaining appropriate teacher - child ratios.

WHY PAID RELEASE TIME MATTERS

Paid release time acknowledges the time commitment a TEACH recipient is making—not only to their education, but to your program. Scholarship recipients agree to remain employed with you for at least one year after completing their contract.

**DON'T FORGET: YOU CAN ALWAYS CONTACT YOUR TEACH SPECIALIST TO DISCUSS
RELEASE TIME STRATEGIES**